



General OM Resources

General Home Stay Reminders

Home stays vary depending on age groups and itineraries. The majority of students stay in a single-family house, often with children, or are hosted by schools or community groups. Other cultural awareness opportunities which students may experience are farm stays, bed-and-breakfast type accommodations, or a European guest house, which is similar to a bed-and-breakfast except that there are opportunities to interact with other people also in residence.

Depending on the itinerary and type of home stay accommodations, Student Ambassadors may be placed by themselves or with one or more additional Student Ambassadors. (Note: Sixth graders traveling with a middle school delegation will have a home stay or guest house experience.)

Preparing for the Home Stay

Part of your preparation should be to prepare gifts for your host, whether a family, innkeeper, or someone you have met while in residence.

(Note: Fifth and sixth grade programs only do not have home stays.)

Some suggestions include small gifts from your city and/or state, like local cookbooks, key chains, hats, books, posters, keepsakes, or even a certificate of appreciation. Some creative Student Ambassador delegations have had pencils, pens, or notepads printed with the delegation name or area. If done as a group, these are personal and easy to transport. Many Student Ambassadors compile personal photo albums by taking pictures of family, pets, hometown, school, friends, sports, and other applicable events and items.

During the Home Stay

Fun and safety are our priorities for the home stay. In the Ambassador Leader Travel Handbook, the program office will announce the “code word” for the year. All delegations should let students know the code word and how to use it. If at any point a delegate feels unsafe, he or she can call the delegation leaders or program office and use the code word. If a code word is used, use any means necessary to let the office know and get to the student ASAP.

Issues Classified as Emergencies

- Students not having beds of their own, or having to share a room with someone of the opposite sex
- No food provided
- A medical problem—injury or serious illness or allergies
- Anything considered to be dangerous or illegal
- Any person or circumstance that makes a student feel threatened in any way

Things that are NOT Emergencies

- Not liking the food or the mealtime hours
- Someone in the family smokes
- Alcohol is served in the family

Make the Most of this People to People Opportunity

- Keep an open mind: “It’s different, not worse.”
- Consider your home stay as a learning experience.